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SUBJECT: RECENT HAZMAT TRAINING USED IN RESPONSE TO AMMONIA LEAK

¶1. On July 21 a purse seiner at anchor in Pohnpei sprung an ammonia leak in one of its chillers. The leak killed one Filipino seaman.

¶2. Pohnpei Port Authority Acting General Manager and Safety and Security Manager Ron Reyes informed Econ/Conoff on July 23 that the Port's HAZMAT Team responded to the initial reports of deaths aboard ship in Pohnpei's harbor. Reyes stated that through the FSM National Government and USG assistance, the port security services went through HAZMAT training three weeks earlier. He added that part of the training was the formation of a HAZMAT Team. Officers from Air Rescue Firefighters (ARF), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Public Safety (DPS or police) make up the newly established HAZMAT Team.

¶3. Using the experience gained in its recent training the HAZMAT team evacuated the ship that suffered the ammonia leak. The team also located the deceased seaman's body and removed him from the ship. Onshore, the team established a decontamination site for the seaman brought ashore. The team returned to the ship on July 22 to conduct a more thorough assessment and determined that it was safe to return to the ship and there was no threat to anyone on shore.

¶4. Although the most recent trainers for the ARF, EPA, and DPS were contractors hired by the FSM national government, Reyes expressed appreciation to the USG for its role in helping the FSM prepare to respond to such emergencies.

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